

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

one, the oedema of which caused a recurrent spontaneous paraphimosis, the patient was "boarded" out of the army.

Onchocerca volvulus

The patient with onchocerciasis had obvious oedema of the penis and scrotum, but the eosinophil count was only 2 per cent. No microfilariae were seen in the blood, but the skin scraping revealed their presence. No subcutaneous swellings indicating the site of the adult worm were observed and no microfilariae could be found in the eyes. There had been one previous attack of genital oedema 2 years previously, which had lasted for 3 months. The present swelling, however, improved greatly after one week and the patient was then discharged to duty. An added interest in this case was a discharging nodule in the scrotum in which Guinea-worm larvae were demonstrated microscopically.

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The Management of Neurosyphilis. By Bernhard Dattner, M.D., Jur.D., with the collaboration of Evan W. Thomas, M.D., and Gertrude Wexler, M.D. Foreword by J. E. Moore, M.D. 398 pp. Wm. Heinemann Ltd., London, Grune and Stratton, New York, 1944. Price 25s.

This book, dedicated to the memory of Wagner-Jauregg, whose assistant the author was in Vienna, is the product of many years' experience of the treatment of neurosyphilis both in Europe and, since 1938, in New York. The volume is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the technique of withdrawal and examination of spinal fluid, its interpretation and evaluation; the second part is devoted to the various methods of treatment in vogue, their application and results.

The author leaves no doubt as to the necessity for and the value of a lumbar puncture. In his conclusion, "the real step forward", he writes, "has been the experience derived from the study of the changes in the spinal fluid in successfully treated paretics, and the understanding of the decisive importance of the humoral syndrome within the framework of diagnostic and therapeutic effort". The need for a complete examination of the cerebrospinal fluid is stressed; the mere report of a Wassermann reaction without a cell count, protein content estimation and colloidal curve, is not only useless but apt to be very misleading. The employment of the fine Dattner needle has made the operation of lumbar puncture a minor procedure, possible in the out-patient department.

A wealth of clinical material is recorded, but it is a matter for regret that, in view of the author's great experience, there is not more information about the clinical aspects of general paralysis, its incidence, its pathogenesis and its pathology; no doubt the title of the book precludes these wider aspects. In Great Britain it would appear that general paralysis is a fast-disappearing disease; it would be interesting to know the position in other countries.

In the section on malaria, no mention is made of *Plasmodium ovale*, which has been employed extensively in Great Britain. Admittedly it is a difficult strain of malaria to maintain, although its benign course, with an almost invariably spontaneous recovery, has made treatment available for the more debilitated type of patient. The malaria charts reproduced are disappointing, especially Chart 1, in which the fever is almost remittent, in my experience to be regarded as a danger signal. I have always laid particular stress on the need for observing the true intermittent character of the fever. Malaria therapy is not an easy procedure, and in the Wagner-Jauregg clinic the mortality rate was undoubtedly very low; a more detailed account of the nursing and management of a case of malaria might well be included. At the Horton Centre rough parasite counts are carried out daily; this procedure has contributed very largely to reducing the mortality risk to negligible figures. In Vienna and New York it appears that all cases are blood-inoculated. Whereas in Great Britain the majority of cases are probably infected with malaria by means of blood supplied from the Horton Centre, the importance of maintaining a mosquito-infected strain is not generally recognized. By this means one is certain of preserving a pure strain, and the original Madagascar strain of *P. vivax* remains clinically and parasitologically the same now as it was when first employed twenty years ago.

A full account of other fever-producing agents is given, although many have now fallen into disrepute. The pros and cons of malaria plus arsenotherapy and malaria versus artificial pyrexia are fully discussed, and the authors are to be congratulated on presenting an unbiased picture and keeping an open mind. To quote Dattner: "There is no reason why one should stress

only the advantages of a method and disregard its disadvantages. Further impartial observations and the test of time will finally bring the desired decision as to whether malaria or artificial fever is the method of choice, but in all probability both will continue to be used."

In discussing the results of treatment by various therapeutic methods, the authors quite rightly stress the importance of the duration and extent of deterioration from the point of view of prognosis, but rather surprisingly do not pay much attention to the type of psychosis. Indeed they regard the chances of therapeutic malaria in juvenile paresis as most unfavourable; this is not altogether in accord with views held by workers in Great Britain; in fact it would appear that treatment in the latent stages, before clinical symptoms supervene, affords a very fair chance of arrest of the pathological process in these young patients. It is interesting that in the Wagner-Jauregg Clinic not more than eight rigors of malaria were given; this was followed by a course of trivalent arsenic, although in more recent years a course of pentavalent arsenic has been preferred. In Great Britain it is the usual practice to give from ten to twelve peaks of fever. The authors however have made abundantly clear the futility of over-treatment; it is a pity that this fact is not more generally appreciated, from the point of view both of economy and of the waste of time involved for both the patient and the physician. There must be a six months' rest period after treatment before the spinal fluid is examined; a persistently positive Wassermann reaction or colloidal gold test six months after treatment has no prognostic significance, but if the number of cells is not decreasing, then further treatment is certainly indicated. A full account of the treatment of tabes and its special complications is given, especially with regard to the problem offered by a tabetic with a negative fluid, but who still has symptoms (lightning pains and so forth).

Throughout this monograph a timely warning is given regarding the danger of evaluation of results over too small a series of cases and the importance of testing various procedures only on unselected patients assigned to either procedure.

The book has an excellent bibliography and is a most valuable addition to the literature of neurosyphilis; it is moreover a worthy tribute to that great clinician, Wagner-Jauregg.

The main thesis presented by the author cannot be overstressed, and finally I would quote from the preface, if only to reinforce his argument: "In dealing with neurosyphilis for more than twenty years, it has become apparent to me that for determining the choice of therapeutic methods, and for evaluation of their success, the spinal fluid syndrome is a far better guide than the clinical symptomatology."

W. D. N.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Editors beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following periodicals, etc.

American Journal of Syphilis

British Journal of Dermatology and Syphilis

British Journal of Urology

British Medical Journal

Crónica médica

Journal of the Cape Town Post-Graduate Medical Association

Journal of Experimental Medicine

Journal of venereal Disease Information

Medicina española

New England Journal of Medicine

Revista de la Asociación médica argentina

Revista de Medicina tropical y Parasitología, Bacteriología, Clínica y Laboratorio

Revista de Sanidad y Asistencia social

Revista del Instituto de Salubridad y Enfermedades tropicales

Revista médica de Chile

Revista médica de Yucatan

South African Journal of Medical Sciences

Urologic and Cutaneous Review